

# CAPITOL STUDIES

APRIL 2, 2025 • WEEK 12



## LUKE FOR LEGISLATORS

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### *Theme Verse*

Luke 19:10

For the Son of Man has come to **seek** and to **save** that which was **lost**.



## The Building of Jesus' Disciples



THERE IS AN INTERESTING STORY recounted for us by Thietmar of Merseburg about the discovery of the tomb of the great king of the Franks: “One hundred and eighty years after the death of Charlemagne, about the year 1000, officials of the Emperor Otto opened the great king’s tomb, where in addition to incredible treasures they saw an amazing sight—the skeletal remains of King Charlemagne seated on a throne, his crown still on his skull, a copy of the Gospels lying in his lap with his bony finger resting on the text, ‘What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?’”<sup>1</sup>

Although this account from the middle ages is likely embellished, that question must still be answered. Your physical life is a small dot on the timeline of eternity. Though your body will die, your soul will go on to live some place forever. What you do with Jesus during your present life will determine how and where you live your eternal life. “Only one life, ‘twill soon be past! Only what’s done for Christ will last.” – C. T. Studd

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## INTRODUCTION

In Luke 9, Jesus gives numerous challenges to His disciples. If you are one of God's children, these challenges are for you today, also.

### I. JESUS STRETCHES HIS DISCIPLES' FAITH

*Luke 9:1-6*

*And He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases. <sup>2</sup>And He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to perform healing. <sup>3</sup>And He said to them, "Take nothing for your journey, neither a staff, nor a bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not even have two tunics apiece. <sup>4</sup>Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that city. <sup>5</sup>And as for those who do not receive you, as you go out from that city, shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them." <sup>6</sup>Departing, they began going throughout the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.<sup>2</sup>*

"Power is the ability to accomplish a task, and *authority* is the right to do it, and Jesus gave both to His Apostles. They were able to cast out demons and heal the sick, but the most important ministry He gave them was that of preaching the Gospel. The word *preach* in Luke 9:6 describes a herald proclaiming a message from the king, and in Luke 9:6 it means 'to preach the Good News.' They were heralds of the Good News!"<sup>3</sup>

This was a faith-building time for the disciples. They were to go from village to village with not even an extra change of clothes. "The point here was to teach them to trust the Lord to supply their needs through the generosity of the people to whom they ministered, and to teach those who received the blessing of their ministry to support the servants of Christ."<sup>4</sup>

*Luke 9:7-9*

*Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was happening; and he was greatly perplexed, because it was said by some that John had risen from the dead, <sup>8</sup>and by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the prophets of old had risen again. <sup>9</sup>Herod said, "I myself had John beheaded; but who is this man about whom I hear such things?" And he kept trying to see Him.*

The news of Jesus' miracles and ministry had spread even to the king. Herod was worried. His guilt over John's death had likely made him very afraid. Imagine his thoughts: "It has to be John, but it can't be! I know he is dead. I saw him. Is it possible that what they're saying is true: he came back to life? I've got to see for myself" (cf. Mark 6:14-16).

*Luke 9:10-11*

*When the apostles returned, they gave an account to Him of all that they had done. Taking them with Him, He withdrew by Himself to a city called Bethsaida. <sup>11</sup>But the crowds were aware of this and followed Him; and welcoming them, He began speaking to them about the kingdom of God and curing those who had need of healing.*



Everywhere Jesus went, eyes were on him. When the disciples returned from their journeys, He tried to take them away to a “secluded” place where they could rest, “[f]or there were many people coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat” (Mark 6:31). But the crowds followed. Though Jesus Himself was in grief, having just heard of the death of His cousin John (Matthew 14:9-13), instead of becoming frustrated or angry, or sending the crowds away, He “was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd” (Mark 6:34). With great love, Jesus welcomed the crowds and patiently used the opportunity to again preach the kingdom of God and heal people in need. What an example to the weary disciples, who probably just wanted to be alone with Jesus, away from people!

## II. JESUS TESTS HIS DISCIPLES’ FAITH

*Luke 9:12-17*

*Now the day was ending, and the twelve came and said to Him, “Send the crowd away, that they may go into the surrounding villages and countryside and find lodging and get something to eat; for here we are in a desolate place.”<sup>13</sup> But He said to them, “You give them something to eat!” And they said, “We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless perhaps we go and buy food for all these people.”<sup>14</sup> (For there were about five thousand men.) And He said to His disciples, “Have them sit down to eat in groups of about fifty each.”<sup>15</sup> They did so, and had them all sit down.<sup>16</sup> Then He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed them, and broke them, and kept giving them to the disciples to set before the people.<sup>17</sup> And they all ate and were satisfied; and the broken pieces which they had left over were picked up, twelve baskets full.*

The crowd stayed with Jesus all day, and the disciples finally asked Him to please send them away so they could get food. Jesus responded, “You feed them.” In disbelief, the disciples said, “The wages for a half year won’t be enough to buy that much food, and all we have here are 5 loaves and 2 fish.” Had they really learned to trust Him to provide while they were on their journeys? Jesus already “knew what He was intending to do” but wanted to see His disciples’ trust in Him (John 6:6-7). “In the crisis hours of life, when your resources are low and your responsibilities are great, ...remember that God already has the problem solved.”<sup>5</sup>

“The Lord looked up to heaven, the source of our daily bread (Matt. 6:11), gave thanks, and blessed the food; and then He multiplied the few loaves and fishes. Jesus was the ‘producer’ and His disciples were the ‘distributors.’ The amazing thing is that *everybody* was served and satisfied, and there were twelve baskets of leftovers, one for each of the disciples. Jesus takes good care of His servants.”<sup>6</sup> Each of the disciples could have his own basket of food! Remember, they had not even had time to eat. After the leftovers were picked up, Matthew 14:22 says Jesus “immediately... made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side, while He sent the crowds away.” He put His friends’ welfare ahead of His own. He cares when we are weary. He always cares for His children.







“Jesus saw people. That is where socialism breaks down. It sees the masses as ‘the working class,’ ‘the underprivileged,’ ‘the industrialists,’ ‘the capitalists,’ ‘the bourgeois,’ and ‘the unemployed.’ But Jesus sees individuals, people whom He loved with an everlasting love. Send them away? Certainly not! Invite them to stay for supper!”<sup>7</sup> Don’t be afraid to serve with just a little. God makes what we have, enough.

### III. JESUS QUESTIONS HIS DISCIPLES

*Luke 9:18-22*

*And it happened that while He was praying alone, the disciples were with Him, and He questioned them, saying, “Who do the people say that I am?”<sup>19</sup> They answered and said, “John the Baptist, and others say Elijah; but others, that one of the prophets of old has risen again.”<sup>20</sup> And He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” And Peter answered and said, “The Christ of God.”<sup>21</sup> But He warned them and instructed them not to tell this to anyone,<sup>22</sup> saying, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and be raised up on the third day.”*

Jesus first asked His disciples who the *people* (the crowds, the masses) thought He was. After the feeding of the 5,000, many called Him a prophet risen from the dead or perhaps Elijah or John the Baptist. Some actually wanted to take Him by force and make Him their king. They wanted the “ultimate Messiah, promised by prophets of old.... This person would not be merely a christ, but *the* Christ.... He would recapture the glory days of David and Solomon, subdue the Romans, and establish a worldwide Jewish empire.”<sup>8</sup>

Jesus then asked who the disciples thought He was. “Peter gave the right answer. The perfect answer, in fact: ‘The Christ of God.’ But time would prove that the brash disciple understood his confession like [we] understand  $E=mc^2$ . [We] can quote it... it has changed our world forever. But please don’t ask [us] to explain it!”<sup>9</sup>

“No explanation for the command not to tell this to anyone is given, but the central section of Luke, chapters 9–19, appears to reveal a reason. The disciples needed to understand who the Messiah really was and exactly what He would do before they were ready to proclaim Jesus as such.”<sup>10</sup> “More than one man had called himself the Messiah and then led a group of hapless insurrectionists to a pathetic death. Jesus didn’t want to incite the multitudes. Besides He had a radically different plan.... His path led to the cross.”<sup>11</sup>

“But Jesus did not stop with a private announcement of His own death. He also made a public declaration about a cross for *every* disciple. In his Gospel, Matthew tells us that this was necessary because of Peter’s desire to protect Jesus from suffering (Matt. 16:22ff). Keep in mind that Jesus is talking about *discipleship* and not *sonship*. We are not saved from our sins because we take up a cross and follow Jesus, but because we trust the Savior who died on the cross for our sins. After we become children of God, then we become disciples.”<sup>12</sup>

## IV. JESUS CHALLENGES HIS DISCIPLES

*Luke 9:23-27*

*And He was saying to them all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. <sup>24</sup>For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. <sup>25</sup>For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself? <sup>26</sup>For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. <sup>27</sup>But I say to you truthfully, there are some of those standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God.”*

Living for Christ requires self-denial. This begins when we voluntarily abdicate the throne of our lives—when we radically renounce self-centeredness. A crucified Savior is not well served by self-pleasing, self-indulging people. What are our crosses? They are not simply trials or hardships. Some think of a nutty boss or an unfair teacher or a bossy mother-in-law as a “cross.” But they are not. Neither can we properly call an illness or a handicap a cross.

“A cross results from specifically walking in Christ’s steps, embracing His life. It comes from bearing disdain because we are following the narrow way of Jesus Christ, ‘the way and the truth and the life’ (John 14:6). It comes from living out the business and sexual ethics of Christ in the marketplace, the community, the family, the world. It comes from standing true in difficult circumstances for the sake of the gospel. Our crosses come from and are proportionate to our dedication to Christ. Difficulties do not indicate cross-bearing, though difficulties *for Christ’s sake* do.”<sup>13</sup>

“Only Luke mentions taking up one’s cross *daily*. To bear the cross means to accept the rejection of the world for turning to Jesus and following Him. Discipleship involves a death that is like a crucifixion; see Gal 6:14. The point of the saying *whoever wants to save his life will lose it* is that if one comes to Jesus, then rejection by many will certainly follow. If self-protection is a key motivation, then one will not respond to Jesus and will not be saved. One who is willing to risk rejection will respond and find true life.”<sup>14</sup>

The definition of the Greek verb “taste” in the last sentence of the verse above is to “‘experience something cognitively or emotionally; come to know something.’ The meaning of the statement that some *will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God* is clear at one level, harder at another. Jesus predicts some will experience the kingdom before they die. When does this happen? (1) An initial fulfillment is the next event, the transfiguration. (2) It is also possible in Luke’s understanding that all but Judas experience the initial fulfillment of the coming of God’s presence [the Holy Spirit] and rule in the work of Acts 2. In either case, the ‘kingdom of God’ referred to here would be the initial rather than the final phase.”<sup>15</sup>





## CONCLUSION

“One might think that the teaching of Holy Scripture and the repeated examples of history, such as Charlemagne’s, would convince modern men and women that keepers are losers. Not so! Consider the case of Somerset Maugham, the most famous author of the 1930s. He was an accomplished novelist, playwright, and short story writer. His novel *Of Human Bondage* is a classic.... He was a man who lived for his own refined tastes, comfort, and sensualities. In 1965, at the age of ninety-one, he was still a fabulously rich man, although he had not written a word in years.... But what did he have of lasting value?

“In an interview with the *The London Times*, April 9, 1978, his nephew Robin Maugham told of his posh villa with its beautiful garden on the edge of the Mediterranean, his 11 servants, his silver plates, his costly furniture, and his prized paintings. But sadly, Robin also shared his uncle’s words after reading from a large print Bible one afternoon. ‘I’ve been reading the Bible.... And I’ve come across the quotation, *What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?* I must tell you, my dear Robin, that the text used to hang opposite my bed when I was a child.... Of course, it’s all a lot of bunk but the thought is quite interesting all the same.’

“Somerset died deaf and blind, ‘an empty, bitter old man who repeatedly cried in terror, “Go away! I’m not ready.... I’m not dead yet.... I’m not dead yet, I tell you....”’ He was a man who had gained the whole world but lost his own soul, a keeper who lost.”<sup>16</sup>

*“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep,  
to gain what he cannot lose.” – Jim Elliot*

Chaplain Arin Hess

## FOOTNOTES

1, 13, 16. Robert K. Hughes, *Luke: That You May Know the Truth*, Crossway Books, 1998, pg. 341–343.

2. All Scripture quotations, unless noted, are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*, 1995 Update.

3, 5, 6, 12. Warren Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, Volume 1, Victor Books, 1996, pg. 205-207.

4. John MacArthur, *MacArthur Study Bible*, pg. 1410.

7. John Phillips, *Exploring the Gospel of Luke: An Expository Commentary*, Kregel Publications, 2009.

8, 9, 11. Charles R. Swindoll, *Insights on Luke*, Zondervan, 2012, pg. 229.

10, 14, 15. *The NET Bible First Edition Notes* (Lk 9:21-27), Biblical Studies Press.

# Personal Study Notes

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## WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY

Meeting during the  
109<sup>th</sup> Legislature's  
First Session

### SENATORS

6:45 – 7:45 A.M.  
Wednesdays  
Capitol Office #1004

### STAFF

12:00 – 1:00 P.M.  
Wednesdays  
NE State Office Building  
Morrill Room



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